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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000568

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2023

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: NEXT STEPS ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Classified By: Econ/Pol Counselor Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b0 and (d).

¶1. (C) Austrian MFA Disarmament Director Alexander Marschik outlined the status and next steps in the Oslo Process to ban cluster munitions in a conversation with Econ/Pol Counselor April 24. Marschik averred that the outlook for the Oslo process was good. He noted that 39 African states had signed up to the "Livingstone Declaration" following a regional CW conference in the spring. Marschik described the Declaration as calling for a very strong ban on CW. At a similar conference in Mexico City in mid-April, Latin American countries had also confirmed their support for a ban.

¶2. (C) Marschik said Austria and other core group states were looking at the definition and interoperability issues. The core group will meet in Geneva on April 30 to discuss these. Marschik said the key decision to be debated would be whether to opt for a "better" treaty that set a tough definition or to opt for a "weaker" treaty that would attract states like the UK, France, and Germany.

¶3. (C) While Marschik and Juergen Meindl, international affairs advisor to Defense Minister Darabos, (in an April 17 conversation) assert that the Austrian military has accepted the idea of a ban, the Director of the Army's Disarmament Office, Col. Richard Monsberger, told Econ/Pol Counselor April 17 that the Austrian military was hoping for a definition that would allow systems with self-destruct mechanisms and/or verified very low failure rates. Monsberger also reported that the military shares many of the interoperability concerns raised by the U.S. but discounted by the MFA.

Kilner